

# **Dealing with Ugliness**

## **The site, the city and the region**

**European Community  
Education and Culture  
Socrates Programme  
Erasmus**

**Intensive Programme 2004-2005**

**"Strategies to reevaluate  
the architectural and urban  
heritage of the early  
20th Century"**

**University of Aveiro  
Budapest University of Technology  
and Economics  
University of Applied Sciences  
Frankfurt am Main  
Politechnic of Milan  
Warsaw University of Technology**

**International Workshop 2004/2005**

**"New urban environment on the site  
of the OLIVA factory,  
São João da Madeira"**

**Aveiro  
Universidade de Aveiro  
April 3 - 17, 2005**

**Edited by Wolfgang Jung, João Mota, Paulo Silva and Kristian Hüsen**

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Results of all workshops can be seen in full colour at: [www.reworking-the-factory.org](http://www.reworking-the-factory.org)

Edited by **Wolfgang Jung, João Mota, Paulo Silva and Kristian Hüsen**

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## Pre-workshop materials

### 1. Budapest: Dorottya's new-old look - A survivor

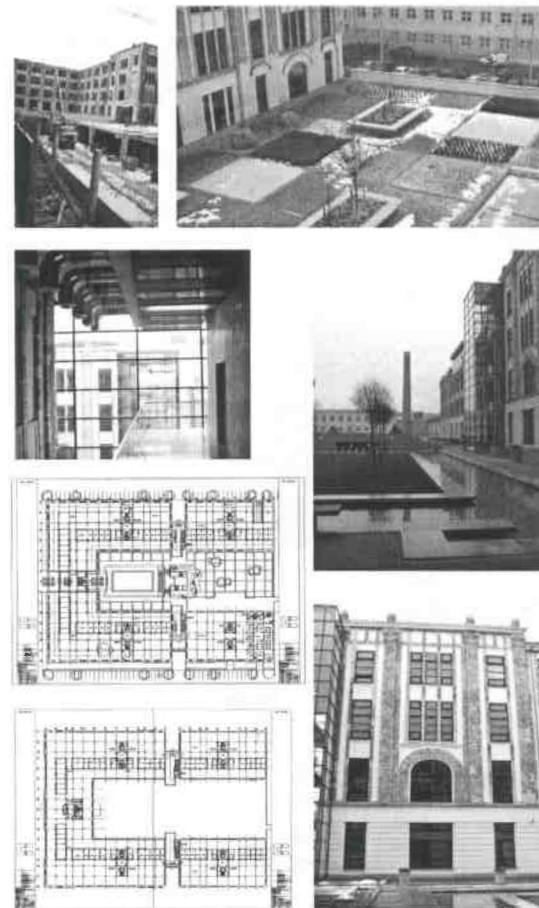
The factory, built in 1911, is located in one of the most dynamically developing commercial parts of Budapest, once located at the city's periphery. Originally built as a military depository, it became a cotton slubber and textile mill, and later housed the country's largest shoe manufacturer. By the 1990's, the building was entirely taken over by nature. Rave parties were held in the empty building, until it was closed due to its life-threatening state.

With its petite ferroconcrete structures, the building was considered as quite modern. Windows and brick panelling of the offsets give rhythm to the facade. A trademark element of the building are concrete vases placed on the offsets. Architect Zoltán Tima kept the headroom and facade structure. He didn't change the character of the building too much: He opened the court, under which a parking lot was built, by taking away some annexes from the building. The British investor requested the octagonal chimney was kept. It is asymmetrically located in the garden. The facade was restored with the concrete vases and the original brick and plaster ornamentation. Large windows, make the offices very

bright. The placement of contemporary installations caused problems: the suspended ceilings run into the window line. Accordingly, headroom is gradually decreasing in the five-bay building. The original wooden window frames were replaced by metal ones with simpler partitions providing an elegant look to the facade with their blueish-greyish colour.

Atriums serve as central reception areas for the U-shaped block and the smaller, later annexes. Maximum height is gained by the application of lightweight framework girders. Inner areas are protected from overheating by screens. Air conditioning is provided by vents built into the ceilings. The endwalls were restored to their original shape.

The intervention is most craggly shown by the up-side-down saucers used to cover technical installations. The building has 5 parts with individual vertical traffic and installations. Interior spaces can be adapted to user needs. The Dorottya-court was the biggest office-investment in Budapest. It is a high standard example of recycling. Due to changing transport circumstances, the accessibility to the building is somewhat difficult and complicated.





## The Ganz factory

Ábrahám Ganz established his foundry in Buda in 1844. It soon developed into a heavy-machinery plant, eventually becoming one of the continent's most significant factories for electrical equipment.

The factory building for 2000 workers was built in 1897 and considered world-class at the time.

In 1911/12, a giant assembly plant was built. Since then, the structure has joined the ranks of industrial monuments, preserving for future generations the history of our industrial and cultural heritage.

However, the recognition and success of "The Ganz" acquired by 1920 ended with World War II. Since then, the huge company made products for diminishing markets. Despite the priority in research and development, a gradual loss of market position and low efficiency led the former giant into a crisis.

By the end of the 1990's, the company's output decreased, followed by the move of the factory to the countryside. In 2000, works began on the former factory site to create the Millenáris Park exhibition and recreation center.

### Millenáris Park

Deciding how much of which building was to be demolished, was crucial for the overall impression. The original character of the

area is defined by long, oversized pavilions perpendicular to the inner axis of the plaza. Today, four of these pavilions still exist in some form. For example, only the rear section of the oldest pavilion (D) is preserved. Parts of the protected historic pavilion (B) and the „Teátrum” (E) were also pulled down for structural or landscaping reasons.

The glass finish of building D (designed by László Benczúr) gives a spectacular highlight to the delicately proportioned three-bay structure of the pavilion and illustrates its fragmentary character: The facade appears as cross-section.

All exterior street fronts retain the original values of the industrial units, while the designers took on contemporary perspectives inside, as the Benczúr-building shows: elegant metal lammellas show a contemporary architectural expression, while the sandblasted brick outer wall elevates the construction technology of the 1890 pavilion to a level of aesthetic merit.

A new building was erected to link the B and D pavilion. József Wéber's new building bridges the stylistic difference between the two pavilions.

The 35.000 square-metre park is very popular. Although some statues are of artistic interest, the most spectacular

element is the pond, which not only connects the buildings, but is also a meeting point for people.

A metal grid reminiscent of the industrial past and a thick plate of glass set into the ground revealing layers of soil, act as urban reminders. The park is a work of a group of young landscape architects named "New Orientation".

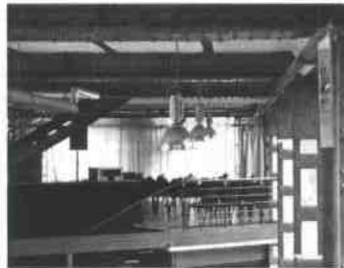
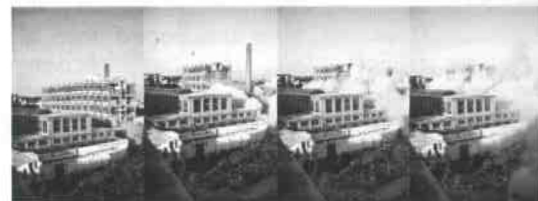
### The Admission building

The admission building, restored by architect Ákos Takács and interior designer Ferenc Szekér, retains most of its original state. An important part of the concept is a tower marking the main entrance. The three-bay structure contains three galleries, giving space for exhibitions and a café. This allows the original space still to be experienced.

The metal frame received a fire-resistant coating. Old and new elements are differentiated by colours. Windows were not changed as in other buildings, just painted. Old lamp-shells and warning signs were re-used in the new interior design, as was a crane. Conduits and other tubes were left visible. The original wooden floor could not be kept due to heavy pollution, also accounting for exchanging the soil to a depth of 2 metres. An original copper machine-

base is left visible, as is an original glass elevator. The building is developed without overdone architectural interventions, making it the most popular one. After closing the permanent exhibitions in the pavilion, new uses of the area are to be considered.

Underfloor heating was designed, but proves inefficient. Reaching acceptable temperatures takes days and is expensive - pavilion D originally had no heating, so electric heaters were installed. Ventilation in summer is also a problem.



## The Wolfner Leather factory

Until the mid 19th Century, Újpest was an agricultural area, and rapidly developed into the fourth largest industrial city of the Country, until finally in the 1980 's production decreased.

Wolfner Gyula and Neckert Albert founded a leather factory and cotton cleaning facility in 1845. By 1873 it was the country's largest. In 1906, significant renovations were undertaken, and shoe production became the main activity. In World War II the factory was ruined, but took on the production of shoes, belts and rubber goods in 1948, adopting the Táncsics Leather Factory name. In 1952 the factory was destroyed by fire, and subsequently not only renovated, but also improved technologically. In 1963, the National Leather Works Company was established, and the factory became its headquarters. Trying to compensate waning exports, they produced furniture leather, but slowly met heavy losses. By 1993, the company was bankrupt and operations stopped.

Other activities moved into the place: a school and a bank. Although most of the spaces are used as storage, two halls now house a modern art gallery. the MEO Modern Art Collection

This opened in 2001, and is operated by a public company. The exhibition shows pieces of art from the 19th and 20th Century

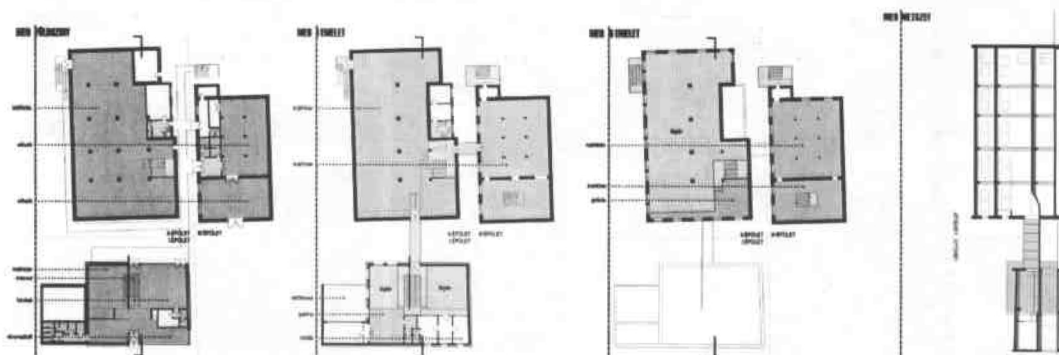
and contemporary Hungarian art, mostly from the collection of the factory's previous owner. It has 2.600 square metres of exhibition spaces.

The MEO buildings are industrial cubes surrounded by green spaces. The remaining buildings are the most valuable ones of the old factory. Minor buildings were replaced by a new entrance building. Extension of the existing wood and concrete structures was necessary. The exhibition areas are situated in the existing buildings. The new building, vertical connections and a glass bridge connecting the buildings are all made of modern materials. The new building's grey polycarbonate exterior integrates the building into its environment, and gives a transparent feeling at night,

which draws attention from outside.

In this entrance building, a café with an internal garden is located. On its side are another gallery, bookstore and cloakroom, with offices on the floor above. The great exhibition hall is reached via stairs and a glass bridge. The halls interior varies between unplastered brick walls and white surfaces. The larger building holds a high and wide-span space thanks to its reinforced frames. The other one has also brick walls with internal wooden supports.

The lower floor can house video-installations and the like. Individual and collective exhibitions or performances and concerts can be held in the assembly hall on the middle floor. The room can be used for receptions, fashion-shows,





fairs and conferences as well. The exhibition continues on the upper floor, which can also hold conferences for 30-150 participants, handled independently. Individual exhibitions can be held in the chambers on the first and second floor of the smaller hall.

By rehabilitating the industrial surroundings and considering historical protection, MEO established an institutional complex of contemporary fine arts, a new type of initiative in Hungary and the former socialist republics.



## The Past... and Present

In the 1860s, one of the first tram depots was built in this triangle bordered by Tölgyfa, Henger and Fekete Sas Streets. Later, the BKV (Budapest Traffic Company) placed an electric transformer centre in the basement. Over time, the depot was rebuilt about 40 times. When it was redeveloped, some called it a disgrace, not understanding how a single building could take so much space in the heart of the city. At the same time, it was listed as monument. On the corner of Henger and Fekete Sas was the Tölgyfa Gallery of the Hungarian University of Arts and Crafts, which provided space for exhibitions and architects' conventions. It used to be the intellectual centre of Hungarian architecture, marked by a wooden tower commemorating Aldo Rossi, designed by Péter Reimholz.

The new building, called Margit Palace and planned by Dezs Eklér DLA, is one of the most modern office buildings in Budapest. 17.138 m2 floor space for offices and two floors of parking space were made on the 6.193 m2 site.

The building meets all demands to offices, both technically and in floor-plan layout. The area is well frequented, easily reached both by car and public transportation and surrounded by many tourist attractions, spare-time facilities, restaurants and cafés. The designer rebuilt the historical brick

facades of the three main bodies. Between them he generated roomy outside spaces with green areas, allowing as much natural lighting as possible, which is considered anthropocentric. At the corner of Tölgyfa and Henger Streets, the building body is closed by an elliptical tower. It marks the main access. Today the complex is approached from the main wings.

Tölgyfa Street has heavy traffic without space for pedestrians. When a neighbouring building was planned with space for pedestrians by drawing back the street facade and dividing the sidewalk from the road, Desz Ekler wanted to continue this concept into his building. He hid the pathway behind the historical wall, thus creating a safe passage for pedestrians. Shops and cafés were to be located along this passage, also providing the main entrance to the offices.

In my opinion, the designer managed the revitalization of the area very well. Margit Palace meets contemporary demands while at the same time saluting to the past. It is also a good example for the problem of contemporary architecture: the pressure of compliance to money and investors.

Actually nothing has changed, but at the same time everything has changed. There still is a tower at the entrance of Tölgyfa Gallery. The roof recalls Aldo Rossi, but in

another way... The three main buildings are still standing and so are the trams. But everything became larger and more glittering - because the investor wanted it to be larger, more beautiful, and higher! Let the granite veneer shine in pink and rosé (matching the old building's brick colour...)! And no need for great spaces inside. Little boxes are easier to sell!

The designer did not want that. He wanted white plaster accentuating the old

bricks' colour, a passage to call the people in, and life inside. He wanted to show the right way of protecting and revitalizing historical buildings. Maybe he wanted to plant a seed, from which something new could grow. His plan, his child, was stolen from his hands. It has grown up rudely. To be exact, one can say it became an office building, but nothing more.

